

but if digression there be, I think it is not without its usefulness in a paper on Indian traditions. This is my point :

If the Noachian deluge was universal neither geographically nor ethnographically speaking, our aborigines must be assigned a probable Asiatic origin, either by descent or by contact, since they have not forgotten that event. Asiatic, have I said : they could not be represented as coming from Africa, for all the black races are remarkable for the absence in their mythology of any allusion to the deluge. Moreover, the physiological differences between the Africans and the Americans are, of course, too pronounced to admit of any serious comparison between the two races. They could not be said to originate from Oceanica, since the inhabitants of that part of the world are no less devoid of any tradition traceable to the deluge. They could hardly be represented as of European origin, as, in the third hypothesis relatively to the extent of the cataclysm, the flood is not supposed to have extended to that continent, and the few versions of the Noachian deluge found among its primitive inhabitants are of too vague a character to have stood the assault of ages among the uncultured savages who would be supposed to have derived their present traditions on the subject from the original European peoples.

But, a student of the Algonquin mythology will object, the story of the floating raft and the muskrat refers, not to the deluge, but to the creation. I have noticed that position taken by a commentator on a Blackfoot equivalent of that portion of the Carrier myth, and even Dr. D. G. Brinton, who sees therein neither creation nor historical deluge, calls it "the national myth of creation of the Algonquin tribes."¹ In answer to that objection, I need only refer the reader to the Carrier version such as presented above, wherein we see the earth peopled before the catastrophe and a gradual submersion of the globe. In confirmation of this might also be adduced the fact that the Indians referring to that event never call it the creation or re-creation of the world, but most pointedly to *pa-tha-dethizpan* which means "the filling up with water."²

To make it doubly sure that the end of the Carrier myth really refers to the deluge, I reproduce here, after Petitot, the corresponding tradition current among the Hare Indians, their congeners in the North-East. It will be seen that the latter can be identified with even less difficulty with the

¹ American Hero-Myths, p. 41.

² The expression is thus analysed : *to*, up, an adverbial form which requires immediate and intimate connection with the verb ; *pa*, sign of the past tense proper to the actualitive form of some verbs ; *dethizpan* means "filled," and implies at the same time the beginning of a past action.